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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W
---------- 055092
R 251029Z SEP 73
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7319
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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S E C R E T BELGRADE 4276

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR YO
SUBJ: GUARANTEEING YUGOSLAV INDEPENDENCE-AN ENIGMA

REF : (A) STATE 175418 ; (B) ROME 9996

1. SUMMARY: THE YUGOSLAVS FROM TIME TO TIME PONDER WHETHER THEIR INTERESTS WOULD BE SERVED BY SOME KIND OF GUARANTEE OF THEIR INDEPENDENCE -- AS REFLECTED BY GRANFIL'S REMARKS TO THE DEPUTY SECRETARY AUGUST 29. HEREWITH OUR THOUGHTS ON WHETHER IT WOULD BE IN OUR INTERESTS, AND HOW TO RESPOND TO SUCH APPROACHES END SUMMARY.

2. WE FIND MORE THAN A LITTLE INTRIGUING AMBASSADORS GRANFIL'S SOMEWHAT ENIGMATIC ADDRESSING OF THE QUESTION OF SOME GUARANTEE FOR YUGOSLAV SECURITY BY THE US AND THE SOVIET UNION (FINAL PARA-GRAPH REF A).

3. WHAT THE US WOULD DO IN THE EVENT OF A THREAT TO YUGOSLAVIA (ALWAYS THOUGHT OF THERE IN TERMS OF THE THREAT BEING SOVIET) HAS OF COURSE LONG BEEN A SUBJECT OF SUBTLE -- OR SOMETIMES NOT SO SUBTLE -- YUGOSLAV PROBING. THE NEW TWIST (AS IS INDICATED BY GRANFIL'S REFERENCE TO "RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN WORLD POLITICS") IS THAT BOTH THE POTENTIAL GUARANTOR OF YUGOSLAVIA'S INDEPENDENCE AND THE PRINCIPAL POTENTIAL INVADER ARE FOR THE FIRST TIME TALKING
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TO EACH OTHER IN A MEANINGFUL FASHION. WHAT THEY COULD BE TALKING ABOUT POTENTIALLY COULD INDUCE MORE THAN A LITTLE SCHIZOPHRENIA AMONG YUGOSLAVS.

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4. THIS TOPIC CAME UP RECENTLY WHEN THE AMBASSADOR SPENT
TIME IN AN INFORMAL ATMOSHPHERE ON AN ADRIATIC ISLAND WITH
MIROSLAV KREACIC, HEAD OF THE FOREIGN SECRETARIAT'S AMERICAS
DEPARTMENT. KREACIC SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD VIEW WITH FAVOR
AND ADVANCE QUITE (I.E., UNPUBLICIZED) UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
OURSELVES AND THE SOVIETS THAT BOTH PARTIES WOULD KEEP HANDS
OFF AND REFRAIN FROM INTERVENTION IN YUGOSLAVIA IN THE POST-
TITO PERIOD. SUCH HINTS OF THE DESIRABILITY OF US-SOVIET COLLUSION
ARE UNTYPICAL OF THE YUGOSLAVS, AND WE SUSPECT
THAT KREACIC'S PARTIAL ENDORSEMENT OF THE CAMPBELL APPROACH
(FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JULY) WAS INFLUENCED BY YUGOSLAV SHOCK
AT THE SULZBERGER PIECE IN NY TIMES OF AUGUST 1, WHICH FORECAST
INACTION BY REST OF WORLD IN EVENT OF ANY SUBTLE APPLICATION OF
BREZHNEV DOCRTIN TO YUGOSLAVIA.

5. TRADITIONALLY, THERE HAS BEEN A SUSPICION HERE OF BIG POWER
COLLUSION IN DEALING WITH YUGOSLAVIA, STEMMING FROM THE ALLEGED
CHURCHILL-STALIN "DEAL" FOR SEPERATE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE IN THE
COUNTRY. THE YUGOSLAVS MIGHT CONCLUDE -- OR AT LEAST CONJECTURE --
THAT IF WE COULD AGREE WITH
THE SOVIETS THAT BOTH SIDES SHOULD KEEP HANDS OF OF YUGOSLAVIA, WE
COULD AS EASILY AGREE WITH THEM ON SOME OTHER DISPOSITION OF
THE QUESTION WHICH MET MUTUAL US-SOVIET (BUT NOT YUGOSLAV)
OBJECTIVES. NOR ARE THE YUGOSLAVS SO NAIVE AS TO BELIEVE THAT
THIS WOULD PRECLUDE THE SOVIETS (UR US, FOR THAT MATTER)
FROM TAKING WHATEVER STEPS MIGHT BE AVAILABLE TO INCREASE
POTENTIAL LEVERAGE NOW OR IN THE FUTURE.

6. THERE IS THE DANGER THAT ANYTHING WE WOULD SAY TO THE
SOVIETS ABOUT KEEPING HANDS OFF WOULD RUN A RISK OF BEING
MISINTERPRETED BY THEM -- EITHER TAKEN AS INDICATING THAT WE
WERE INVITING DISCUSSION OF A DEAL, OR THAT WE WERE DISPLAYING
A DIMINISHED INTEREST IN YUGOSLAVIA IN OUR STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS.
BOTH WOULD BE WRONG AND POSSIBLY DAMAGING.

7. THERE DOES APPEAR TO BE SOME ADVANTAGE TO OUR PUTTING THE
SOVIETS ON NOTICE THAT WE WOULD NOT WISH TO SEE YUGOSLAVIA BECOME
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THE VITIM OF AN EAST-WEST TUG-OF-WAR IN THE POST-TITO ERA
ALTHOUGH NOT IN THE DIRECT APPROACH SUGGESTED BY CAMPBELL,
WHICH TENDS TO EQUATE US WITH THE SOVIETS. CERTAINLY WE HAVE
NO DESIGNS ON POST - TITO YUGOSLAVIA, BUT THE SOVIETS MAY WELL
HAVE. TO MEET THIS PROBLEM, WE MIGHT CONSIDER INFORMING THE SOVIETS
AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME, AND WITH A CONVENIENT AND PLAUSIBLE PEG,
THAT AN INDEPENDENT AND NONALIGNED YUGOALVIA CONTINUES TO PLAY
AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN OUR STRATEGIC THINKING, THAT WE VIEW
OUR NATIONAL INTEREST AS SERVED BY YUGOSLAVIA'S BEING IN THE
BEST POSSIBLE POSITION TO GO THROUGH POST-TITO TRANSITION WITHOUT
POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC DESTABILIZATION (WITH THE DANGERS THAT W
WOULD BRING FOR BALKAN STABILITY), THAT WE WOULD VIEW WITH
SERIOUS CONCERN ANYTHING WHICH WOULD HAVE THE POTENTIAL OF

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DETRACTING FROM THIS, AND THAT WE TRUST THE SOVIETS JOIN US IN THIS VEIW. THUS STATED TO THE SOVIETS AND CONVEYED TO THE YUG-OSLAVS, SUCH A POSITION COULD SERVE TO REASSURE THAT PART OF THE YUGOSLAV PSYCHE WHICH SEEKS A GUARANTEE WITHOUT INCREASING FEARS OF A DEAL AT YUGOSLAVIA'S EXPENSE. IT MIGHT ALSO AFFECT SOVIET CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN AN ADVANTAGEOUS WAY.
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